

"At eventide it shall be light"

Gen. 24: 63-67; Zech. 14: 7; Luke 24: 27.

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JULY/AUG 1969

I want to relate two sentences together — "the things concerning Himself," and "At eventide it shall be light." I have no doubt, dear brethren, the shadows are lengthening. One feels in one's spirit what it must mean to the heart of Christ to see the dark shadow of apostasy settling over that part of the earth where the light has shone. It is the eventide, and that which will help us in the eventide is for our hearts to be set upon "the things concerning Himself." One delights in the fact that in spite of the accumulating darkness God has said "at eventide it shall be light." We can refer that to the thief on the cross. As the shadows deepened a bright light as to the Saviourship of Jesus shone into his heart, and he, having already testified to the fact that this blessed Man had done nothing amiss, could say "Remember me, Lord, when Thou comest in Thy kingdom" (New Trans.). At eventide it was light! I think of the aged Simeon too. In the darkness that surrounded God's people at that time, taking the Child into his arms and receiving, as he did, a ray of light beyond all that he had ever experienced said, "Mine eyes have seen *Thy* salvation . . . a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel." Light at eventide!

Now these dear people in Luke 24 in the gloom and despair that the crucifixion had pressed upon their spirits, were moving to their home despondent and sad. One feels that we hardly enter into what their spirits must have felt as they had seen the One upon whom every hope of Israel was set, crucified — and as they move He joins them. How blessed it is in a day of gloom and despair to experience the company of Christ! There is nothing to equal it. He drew near and went with them. Ah, beloved brethren, let us take courage; however dark the path we can have His blessed company and that makes up for all. Apostate Christendom! Yes, but the intrinsic glory of Christ remaining in all its superlative blessedness, and *He drawing near*. Do we experience His drawing near? He loves to draw near and cause our hearts to burn. It was about eventide — it was getting dark, darker; and suddenly there is an awakening in their hearts, the light of who He is, the risen Christ. They had constrained Him to come in, and He made Himself known to them in the breaking of bread — precious moment! The Lord Jesus would delight to do that to our hearts today; as we hold the ground in the face of the darkness of impending apostasy, He will draw near. Not only will He say "Come near to Me, My brethren" but in the infinite love of His heart, He would draw near, and make Himself known to us. It is a very blessed and very real moment when our affections go out to Him in response to His own affections, but may we also have the desire that on each occasion, in these apostate days, He might give us a fresh ray of the charm of His blessed person. He is so infinitely great, coming to us, making Himself known to us in the breaking of bread.

One of the things that He did was to speak of the things in the Psalms concerning Himself. Let us allow our affections to absorb something of the preciousness of the things concerning Christ as related in the Psalms. Let us draw near — holy ground this, brethren — precious ground; one's heart almost fails as one speaks of the abandonment of Jesus, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Preserved for us, in the skill of the Spirit of God, in the very words that Jesus used — "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" Brethren, I desire that the Holy Spirit might press upon us the fact that this is one of the things in the Psalms concerning Himself, this blessed, glorious Person. "Who is over all, God blessed for ever" here in holy manhood. What infinite love that could take such a place for you and for me.

Those three hours of darkness! What they meant to the heart of Christ! what they meant to the heart of God! is unknown to us. There is only one answer to that question. "Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." He was there to sustain all that was due to the holy throne of God. The Psalms are a book of feelings. The Psalms are a book of experience with God. Let us challenge our hearts as to how far our feelings, and how far our experience with God have been enriched as we have read this Psalm, so well known. As we have contemplated these words so often quoted, have our feelings been touched, have the depths of our affections been stimulated in response to Christ; has there been brought about a deeper experience of the blessed God who could spare His Son in order that every blessing which we have contemplated and thought of in these days might be assured for His glory and our blessing.

"Thou wilt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." God saw to it that no odour of corruption came from that tomb. It is the only tomb in the universe, beloved brethren, from which no odour of corruption has arisen. Do we realize what the feelings of God must have been when He took that blessed Person from the grave; when He raised Him "from the dead by the glory of the Father"? If in sympathy with the feelings of God, we realize in our measure what the darkness of abandonment must have been, do we not rejoice when we take account of the fact that glory has visited that tomb and brought Him out?

Then again we read, "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." We know these truths so well, but do we see them in relation to the feelings of divine Persons? Think of the blessed God as He takes account of Christ at His right hand and says, "Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." God is taking account of all those who stood against His beloved Son; He is taking account of the day when every enemy shall be laid low and Christ alone shall be exalted in that day. We marvel at the patience of divine Persons waiting for that day, and desire, as the Lord may help us, to enter sympathetically into the feelings of God as He takes account of a blessed Man at His right hand, in whom He will head up all things for Himself.

These are things, dear brethren, that should engage our hearts as the evening shadows lengthen. The darkness has been dealt with in the abandonment; triumph has been seen in the resurrection. The control of all things is in the blessed hands of Christ at God's right hand, and our hearts are at rest; our hearts are filled with joy and responsive affection to Christ.

In referring to Genesis 24, I want to raise the question as to our appreciation of this blessed Man who comes typically before us. The servant was sent to procure a bride for Isaac, and we read at eventide Isaac was meditating in the field. The blessed Lord is waiting; He is waiting patiently in the eventide of this dispensation. The Holy Spirit being sympathetic with the feelings of Christ would impress those same feelings upon our hearts as He speaks to us of the precious things concerning Christ. The test comes to this woman as to whether she is prepared to follow the leading of the servant; and the test comes to us as to whether we are prepared for the Holy Spirit to engage our affections exclusively with Christ. How worthy He is of His bride! Whilst He waits He is impressing our hearts with the greatness of who He is in His person. There are many questions asked as to the person of Christ. The Lord Jesus could challenge His disciples "Whom do men say that I am?" There was conjecture; there was supposition; but one answer stands out most precious — "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." He, beloved brethren, is the One who would hold our affections in this day of deepening darkness. The scene of death lighted up by the charm of the Son of the living God! Sardis, protestantism — a name to live but dead — and over against that the truth of the cross and the Son of the living God. These are the things concerning Himself.

There was a question raised in the minds of the Pharisees — who is this Man that forgiveth sins? Have we ever sat down really to consider *Who* the blessed Man is who has forgiven us our sins? Who is this that forgiveth sins? It is so easy to take the blessings that come to us without our feelings being deeply affected. Our sins have been forgiven us *for His Name's sake*. We are here to stand for what is due to His precious Name. The forgiveness of sins is not something we just take and go on our pathway without regard to the preciousness of the One who has forgiven us our sins. These truths so well known to us should arouse feelings in our hearts that we might understand something of the depth of feeling that was *His* when He went to Calvary's cross in order that our sins might be forgiven.

Saul, on the way to Damascus, asked "Who art thou, *Lord*?" We know that He is Lord, that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, but how far has the knowledge of Christ as Lord really affected us in responsiveness to Himself? There is no question that has arisen amongst the saints that could not have been settled at once if our feelings were held in relation to the Lordship of Christ. If it were a matter of intense feeling to us instead of mere doctrine, then I am convinced there would be no difficulties at all, in homes, businesses, or in assemblies. I am convinced of this, that what I need, what the brethren need, is that our feelings be gripped by the fact that Jesus is Lord.

"Who art thou, Lord?" "I am Jesus!" Precious Saviour; glorious Christ, risen Blessed Man in Heaven, the One who went into the abandonment that our sins might be forgiven. Is He not worthy to be recognised as Lord in every movement of our lives?

The blind man in John 9 — "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" "Who is he, Lord?" Do we believe on the Son of God? Yes, of course we do, but how far has the truth of the Son of God affected us feelingly? What new experience with God has the truth of the Son of God brought about? The most important thing that can happen to any of us in these days is to have an increased experience with the blessed God. Of that I have no doubt at all. As we think of Jesus as the One who has forgiven our sins, it should give us a fresh experience of the *love* of God; as we think of Christ Jesus as Lord, it should give us a fresh experience of the *rights* of God; and as we realize the truth of the Son of God it should give us a fresh experience of the *glory* of God. What a blessed, glorious Person the Son of God is! The knowledge of Him as such opens up a vista that is beyond the human eye. The glory that surrounds the Christ of God as the Son of God is beyond the comprehension of men. In His personal name as Son we cannot know Him, but ministry is given that we should arrive at the knowledge of the Son of God, and it is a *heart* matter to arrive at the knowledge of the Son of God. The Father loveth the Son! He has given all things to be in His hands. Everything has been given over to that blessed Person. A blessed Man whose every movement was towards God, every word He spake expressing God, every deed He did being the replica of what God would do, in all things pleasing God! Have our affections entered livingly into what God must have felt in regard of His beloved Son when He took account of Him? That holy thing that shall be born shall be called "Son of God." He moved through this scene as the One who had all things of the Father committed to His hands; the One who had power to give life; the One who has power to speak and empty the grave. As the darkness gets more intense, the light and the glory shining in the face of the Son of God should affect our every movement and our every thought.

He forgives our sins; He is our Lord; we know Him as God's blessed Son; we know the day is coming when we are going to be conformed to the image of God's Son. Blessed fact that! glorious fact! It should affect us inwardly. Have we sufficiently thought, dear brethren, of the feelings of the blessed God when He looks round on all those that are exactly like Christ? but there is more. In Genesis 24 Isaac is meditating in the field at eventide. Waiting! I would that I could express to you what I feel in relation to that. The patience of the heart of Christ as he waits for His bride. The glorious Son of God; the One who has been into death; the true Isaac; the One who has been bereaved of His earthly people.

Sarah had died, and Christ, I speak feelingly, has been bereaved of His earthly people. Israel has forsaken Him. Israel has no feelings of reciprocity to the love of Christ. He looked for comforters and found none. He looked for pity and found no man. He came unto His own and His own received Him not. He is the rejected One. Not only that He has been rejected but He *is* despised and rejected; and it is in such a scene as this, that He would engage our affections feelingly with Himself. Rebecca sees Isaac coming to meet her. Beloved brethren, this glorious Person is *coming* to meet us! What is He meditating upon? I would not like to strain Scripture. I believe He is meditating upon that glorious moment when love reaches its consummation, and He will have His bride to Himself. The bride goes right through to eternity. He is meditating upon that glorious, eternal scene, when His love will receive full response from the hearts of His lovers. He is coming to meet us with these thoughts in His blessed heart. And what is our response? Who is the Man that is coming to meet us? Of course, we know the doctrine, but what do we know of the blessed *Man* who is coming to meet us? This is what I am pleading for — that our feelings might go out towards Him; whether it be as the One who forgives us our sins; whether it be as Lord; whether it be as Son of God; that these things might not be pious platitudes to us but that they might produce from our hearts a response to His own blessed heart. There is a Man coming to meet us. A blessed, glorious Man. Gabriel is not coming; He is coming Himself; coming to meet us, and affection for His own fills His heart as He meditates.

"At eventide it shall be light." Just at this moment the Holy Spirit floods the Person of Christ typically with immense light. All down the chapter the servant has been saying "He is my master's son." Who is this man that is coming to meet us? It is my *Master*! In one sentence all the glory that belongs to the blessed God is put upon His blessed head. In these last days, beloved brethren, I believe the Holy Spirit, in the face of the darkness of apostasy, is enlarging before us the glory of this blessed Person, and just before He comes to meet us He is flooding our hearts with a fresh sense of the glories of our beloved Lord. It should affect our hearts. Feelingly, lovingly, preciously, the charm of Jesus touches our affections as we take account of His coming to meet us. He is coming to meet us. Our Saviour, our Lord, the Son of God, a blessed Man, who has feelings as a man, whose heart is centred on His bride, who has waited patiently that He might have a full response from the hearts of His lovers.

May the Lord help us to respond fully to Him; not to be content to know *about* Him, but to have our affections deeply impressed by the blessedness of the Christ of God. Beloved brethren, He is coming to meet us. It is eventide, but soon we are going to be in the light of His blessed presence, and until He comes He says "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."